

FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIORS

PROVIDED BY THE FORT MILL FIRE DEPARTMENT



FORT MILL FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Fire Safety Education (803) 547-5511



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This booklet is designed to inform older adults and their caregivers about fire safety. It's a fact that older adults, aged 65 and older die in home fires more often than the rest of the population. However, you can prevent fire hazards by taking care of yourself and influencing others. People can and have saved their own lives and the lives of others by following a few fire safety steps and precautions.

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Leading Cause of Fire Deaths and Injuries in the Home for Adults 65 Years and Older

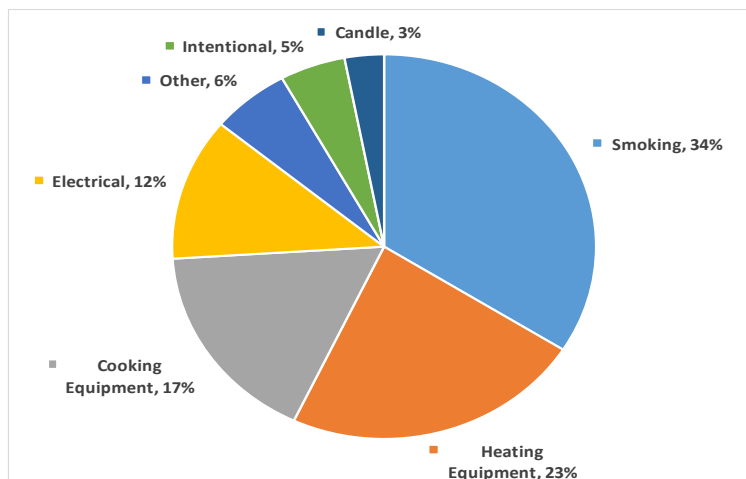
During 2007—2011, home structure fires killed an estimated average of 2,570 people and caused an average of 13,210 reported civilian (non-firefighter) injuries per year.

- Only 13% of the U.S. population is 65 or older, but 30% of the home fire fatalities were at least 65 years of age.

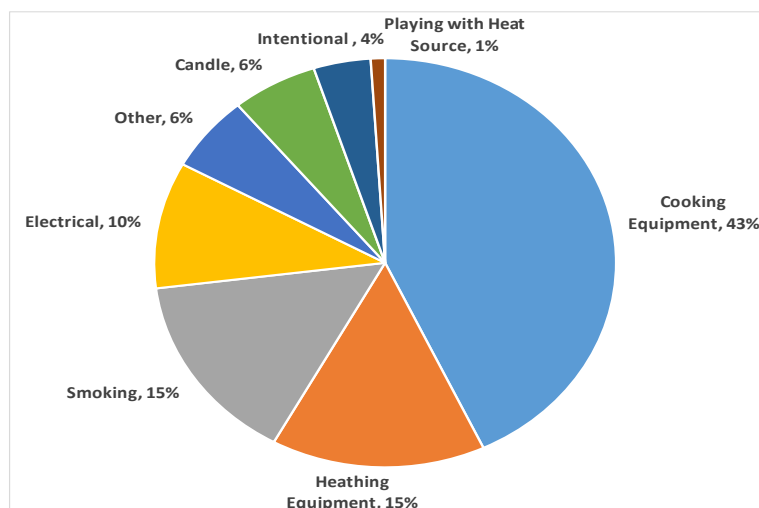
During 2007—2011, cooking equipment was the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Smoking was the leading cause of home fire deaths.

- While 22% of the deaths and 10% of injuries were caused by fires started by smoking materials, one-third of the fire deaths and 15% of the injuries in the 65 and older age group resulted from these fires.

Leading Causes of Fire Deaths in the Home for Adults 65 Years of Age and Older:



Leading Causes of Fire Injuries in the Home for Adults 65 Years of Age and Older:



Statistics taken from "NFPA, Home Fire Deaths and Injuries: Overall Trends and Patterns by Age, Gender and Race Fact Sheet, 2014.

PREVENT SMOKING FIRES

SMOKERS BEWARE

Smokers are seven times more likely than nonsmokers to be fire victims.

Smoking materials are the **NUMBER ONE** cause of home fires that kill seniors.



If you or others in your home smoke, prevent fires before they start:



- Use large, deep, non-tip ashtrays.

Never leave a lighted cigarette in an ashtray or leave an ashtray on the arm of a couch or chair.



- Before going to bed or going out, check between, on and under upholstery and cushions for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.



- Douse cigarette butts completely with water before discarding them.



- Make it a **RULE** to never smoke in bed or while lying down, especially when you are drowsy or taking medication that makes you sleepy.



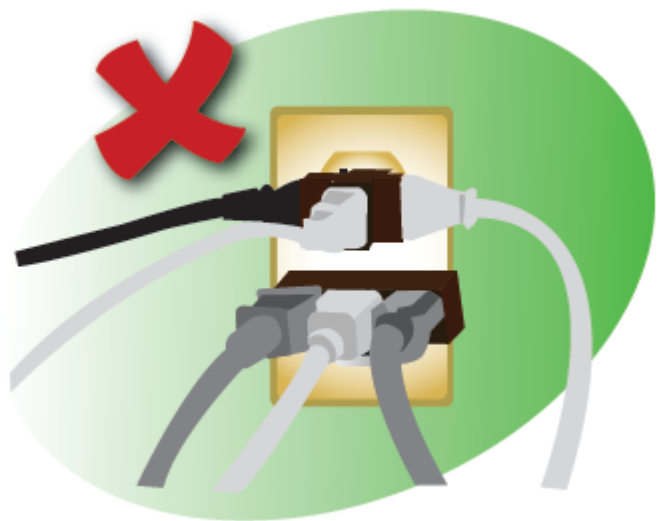
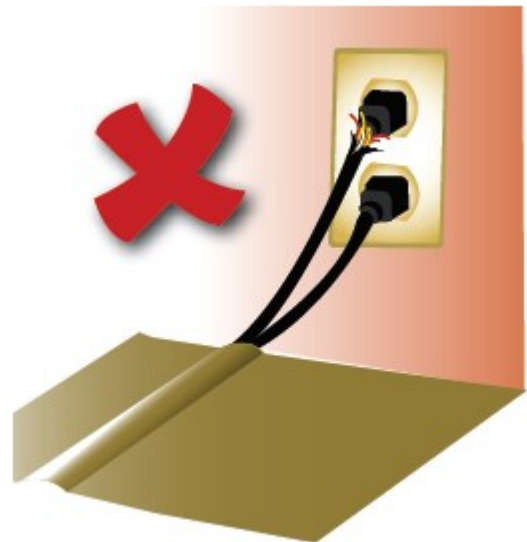
- **NEVER** permit smoking around the storage or use of an oxygen tank

PREVENT ELECTRICAL FIRES

Use light bulbs with the appropriate wattage for the size of the light fixture. A bulb with too many watts may lead to overheating and fire.

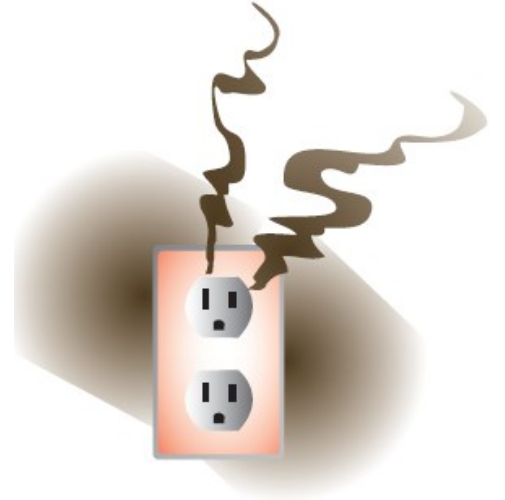
CAUTION: TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FIRE USE
60WATT TYPE A  OR SMALLER LAMP
120V 60Hz AC ONLY UNPLUG TO REPLACE BULB
MADE IN CHINA

- Give televisions, stereos and computers plenty of clearance to prevent overheating.
- Use extension cords for temporary use only.
- Protect all electrical cords from damage. Do not run cords under carpets or rugs, or hang them from nails.
- Never use an appliance with a damaged or frayed cord.
- To prevent overloading, never plug more than one appliance into an outlet at once or “piggyback” extra appliances on extension cords or wall outlets.



PREVENT ELECTRICAL FIRES

- Ensure that outlet switch plates are in good condition. If the outlet or plate is hot to the touch, immediately unplug the cord and have a qualified electrician check your wiring.
- If an appliance develops a different smell, makes unusual sounds or the cord feels warm to the touch, pull the plug and discontinue its use.
- If the appliance continues to burn or smoke, call the Fire Department by dialing 911.
- When purchasing an electrical appliance, such as a toaster or coffee maker, be sure that the equipment has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark, which shows that the product has been safety tested.



WARNING



The potential for electric shock from electrical wiring and appliances is very real.



PREVENT HOME HEATING FIRES

Many people use space heaters during cold weather months. However, space heaters are responsible for 3 out of every 3 home-heating fires.



SPACE HEATER SAFETY:

- When purchasing an electric space heater, look for heaters with automatic shut-off features.
- Only use equipment that has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark, which shows that the product has been safety tested.
- **Give space heaters space.** Place the heater at least 3 feet from any combustible material, such as bedding and furniture.
- Keep young children and pets away from space heaters.
- While heater cords normally become warm during use, **STOP using the heater if the cord becomes hot.**
- **NEVER** use an extension cord with a space heater.
- Place the heater on the floor; never on a countertop or furniture.
- Turn off or unplug the space heater whenever you leave the room or go to sleep.



PREVENT HOME HEATING FIRES

ELECTRIC BLANKET SAFETY

- Only use electric blankets that have the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark, which shows that the product has been safety tested.
- Discontinue the use of any electric blanket that has broken or frayed cords.
- Plug the electric blanket cord direct into a wall outlet, or into a surge protector, **NEVER** use an extension cord to plug your electric blanket into an outlet.
- Avoid tucking the electric blanket in at the sides of the bed. This can cause excessive heat build-up.
- Avoid placing other blankets or comforters on top of an electric blanket while it is in use.
- Never use an electric blanket that is wet, soiled or wrinkled.
- It is best to warm the bed with your electric blanket and turn it off before going to bed.
- Wash your electric blanket infrequently, because repeated washing can damage the electrical circuitry.



Old or damaged electric blankets cause thousands of fires a year that result in deaths and injuries.

If your electric blanket is more than 10 years old, the best advice is to buy a new one!

PREVENT KITCHEN FIRES AND INJURIES

Remember to “stand by your pan” and never leave cooking food unattended. Heat cooking oils gradually and use extra caution when deep-frying.

Always wear short or tight-fitting sleeves while cooking. Long, loose sleeves are more likely to catch fire, and exposed skin could burn.

Turn pot handles inward toward the back of the stove to prevent accidental bumping of pan and causing a scald injury.

Use oven mitts to protect hands and arms from burns.

Cook at low to medium temperature settings. To prevent scalds, let microwave heat foods and allow liquids to stand for a minute or two before touching or eating.



Cooking accidents are the leading cause of fire and fire injuries in the home.

To prevent hot water scalds, set hot water heater thermostat at 110°F.

PREVENT KITCHEN FIRES AND INJURIES

RECIPE FOR KITCHEN SAFETY

Follow this recipe for safety and you will prevent most cooking fires and burn injuries:

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 Watchful Eyes



- 2 Short or Tight-fitting Sleeves



- 1 Pot Lid



- 1 or 2 Potholders/Oven Mitts



- 1 Clean Area Around the Stove, Free of Anything that can Burn



- 1 Large Box of Baking Soda



Should a fire occur - Turn **OFF** the Stove, Use Baking Soda to Extinguish the flame, and S/or Slide ta Pan Lid Onto the Pan.

DO NOT USE WATER - Water will cause splashing and spread the fire.

Do not attempt to pick up the pot or pan and carry it away from the stove.

TREATING A BURN

Burns can be caused by direct contact with an open flame, hot liquids and grease or from a hot surface. Many burns may be deeper than they appear and require immediate medical attention. Remove clothing from affected area, but do not attempt to remove clothing that sticks.

If you get a burn:



Treat with cool running water.



Cover the burn with a sterile pad or clean sheet.



Never apply ointment, grease or butter to the burned area.



Seek immediate medical attention to prevent inflammation and infections.

Older adults usually have a more severe reaction to burns.

FOR CHEMICAL BURNS:

For chemical burns caused by products such as oven or bathroom cleaners:

Flush with cool water for 20 to 30 minutes. If eyes are affected flush with water for at least 20 minutes.

CLOTHING FIRES

IF ANY PART OF YOU OR YOUR CLOTHING CATCHES FIRE:



STOP - Cover your face with your hands.



DROP - Drop to the ground.



ROLL - Roll over and over.



If physical limitations prevent you from taking these steps, try to smother the flames with a fire-resistant wool blanket or rug.

REMEMBER - Do not try to fight the fire yourself. **DO NOT RUN** or try to put out the fire with your hands!

FIRE ESCAPE PLANNING

DON'T BE SCARED BE PREPARED



Make sure a phone is next to your bed and within reach (or a TTY/TTD device, if you use one).



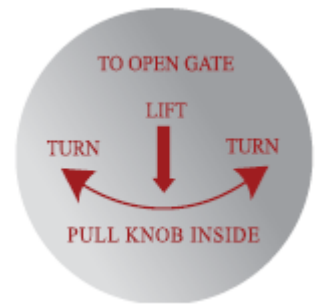
Keep your eyeglasses, keys, and hearing aids (if necessary) within reach next to your bed.



Make sure lamp or light switches are within reach.



Practice unlocking and opening the windows, security gates and doors.



Keep stairways and exits clear of clutter and storage. Do not store anything on or under building fire escapes.

More than 50% of home fire deaths occur between 10 P.M. and 6 A.M., when most people are sleeping.

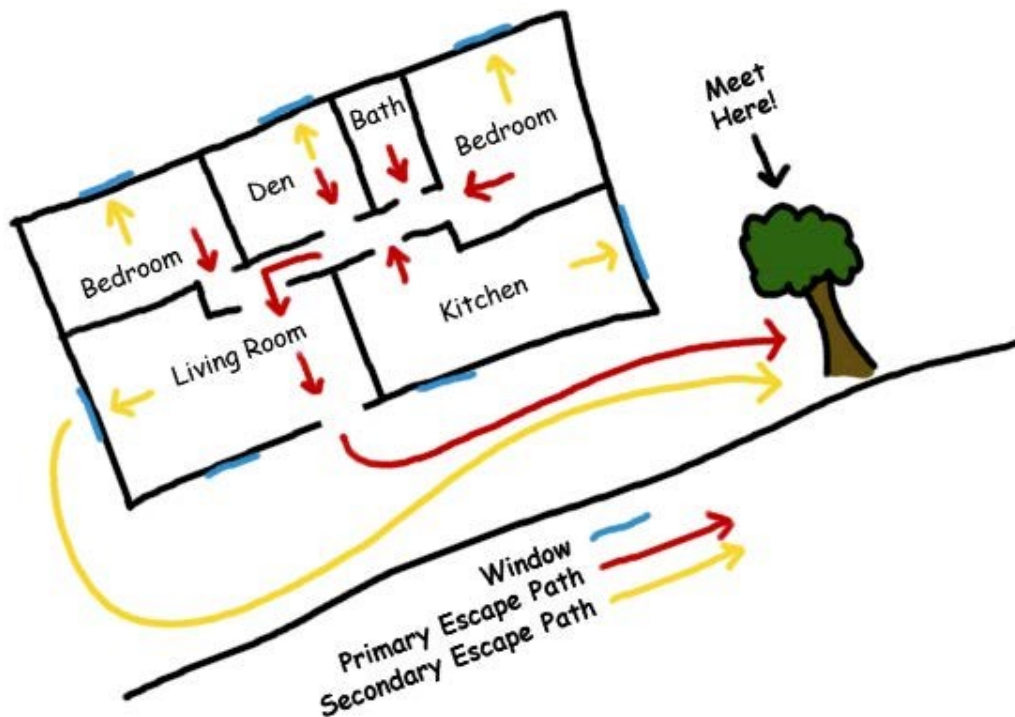
FIRE ESCAPE PLANNING

Be prepared by having an escape plan. It is one of the most important steps you can take to save your own life!

ESCAPE PLAN

If you live in an apartment building, know where the exit stairwells are located.

Know two exits from your home, apartment, or building.



If you live in a multi-story home, consider sleeping on the ground floor near an exit.

After making your personal evacuation plan practice it at least once a month.

Use the provided blank evacuation plan on the next page to make your personal emergency escape plan.

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KNOW WHAT TO DO

If there is a fire in your home or apartment:

- Do not try to fight the fire yourself.
- Do not stop to gather personal belongings.



- Get out by implementing your emergency escape plan, using the closest or safest exit.
- If smoke is present, stay as low to the floor as possible and cover your mouth.



- Close the door on your way out.
- Use the stairways to exit the building.



DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR!



- If you are trapped, close all the doors between you and the fire and call **911**. Tell the dispatcher where you are located so emergency personnel know where to rescue you.



KNOW WHAT TO DO

If you live in a residential apartment building:

NON-FIRE PROOF BUILDINGS:

If there is a fire in your building, but not in your apartment and you live in a non-fire proof building, it is safer to **leave the building immediately**.

- Implement your fire escape plan by using the closest or safest exit.
- Check the apartment door with the back of your hand. If it is hot, do not open the door.
- If the door is cool, but there is smoke in the hallway, assess the situation and your own abilities to exit safely from the building. Stay as low to the floor as possible and cover your mouth. **Close the door on your way out!**
- Use stairways to exit from the building. **DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.**

If you determine there is too much smoke in the hallway, close your apartment door and call 911, and inform the dispatcher where you are.

FIRE PROOF BUILDINGS:

If there is a fire in your building, but not in your apartment and you live in a fire proof building, it is safer to **STAY INSIDE** and keep the door closed. Call **911** and give the dispatcher your apartment location and address.

Contact your building owner regarding your building's fire safety plan and construction type. Planning is the key to protecting yourself and your family.

SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE

Follow these safety tips to ensure that you will have an early warning in case of a fire:

- Install a smoke alarm outside and inside each bedroom or sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- Chirping alarms are warnings that the battery is low. Replace batteries twice a year, in the spring and fall, when clocks are changed for daylight-saving time.
- Purchase alarms with a 10 year lithium battery to eliminate the need to change the batteries every six months. Lithium batteries are more expensive than typical 9-volt batteries; however, they are designed to last the lifetime of the alarm.
- If you are hearing-impaired, install smoke alarms with strobe (flashing) lights and bed shaking device.
- Install smoke alarms with a hush or silent button feature for nuisance alarms due to cooking vapors or steam. Rather than removing the battery, this feature allows you to silence the unit for 10 to 15 minutes while you clear the air.
- Install photoelectric-type smoke alarms, which are the most reliable for smoldering fires, which often occur in bedrooms or sitting rooms.



Contact the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal Office's Smoke Alarm Hotline to have a fire professional to install a smoke alarm at no charge to you, at (704) 336-2697.

A smoke alarm is the single most valuable life-saving device you

MEDICATION SAFETY TIPS

The older you get, the more likely you are to use additional medicines, which can increase the chances of harmful drug interactions.

Follow these 4 medication safety tips:

1. Take medicine as prescribed.

- Take your medicine regularly and according to your healthcare provider's instructions.
- When taking multiple medicines separate the pills into a weekly pill box.



2. Keep a medication list.

- Write down what you're taking and keep the list with you. Consider giving a copy to a friend or loved one that you trust.

3. Be aware of potential interactions.

- Drug interactions can occur when one drug affects how another works, a medical condition you have makes a certain drug potentially harmful, a food or non-alcoholic drink reacts with a drug, or a medicine interacts with an alcoholic drink.

4. Review medications with your healthcare provider.

- Schedule at least 1 annual review of your medications with your healthcare provider to confirm which medications are still necessary and which you can stop taking (if any).

Use the provided Medical Information and Medication List form provided on the next page.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND MEDICINE LIST

Date of Last Update: _____

Name: _____

Notify in Case of Emergency: _____

Doctors Name & Phone Number: _____

Health Problems/History: (Mark all that are appropriate)

_____ Heart Attack	Date: _____	_____ Cancer
_____ Diabetic		_____ Alzheimer's
_____ Stroke	Date: _____	_____ Other (List Below)
_____ Seizures		_____
_____ COPD (Breathing Problems)		_____
_____ Emphysema		_____
_____ Congestive Heart Failure		_____

MEDICATION LIST:

MEDICINE NAME	DOSAGE (MG)	No. OF PILLS	TIMES PER DAY

DO YOU HAVE ANY MEDICATION _____

ALLERGIES: _____

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY CALL **911**.

HAVE THIS LIST HANGING SOMEWHERE EMERGENCY PERSONNEL CAN SEE IT TO PROVIDE PROPER CARE.

(EXAMPLE: REFRIGERATOR, BACK DOOR, NEAR MEDICATIONS...)

[illegible]

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as a guide to identify possible fire safety problems in your home. If you check NO to any question the potential hazard should be corrected to reduce your risk and increase your preparedness for fire.

YES

NO

☐☐

Do you have at least one operable smoke alarm?

☐☐

Do you have at least one operable carbon monoxide alarm?

☐☐

Are all electrical cords in good condition (not frayed or cracked)?

☐☐

Are all electrical cords in the open, not run under rugs or through doorways?

☐☐

Are space heaters placed at least 3 feet from combustibles?

☐☐

Are space heaters plugged direct into wall outlets and not extension cords?

☐☐

Can all windows be opened easily from the inside?

☐☐

Are building stairways free of storage and rubbish?

☐☐

Are stairway fire doors self closing and kept closed?

☐☐

Are exit and emergency lights in stairway in good working order?

☐☐

Do you have operable flashlights handy?

☐☐

Do you have a fire escape plan?

☐☐

Have you practiced your fire escape plan?

☐☐

Do you have a working fire extinguisher in your home or apartment?

☐☐

Do you have a Medical/Medicine List in case of emergency?

Immediately correct problems or hazards that are within your control or responsibility. Notify the building owner of all other problems, and if necessary, you may contact the Fort Mill Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office at (803) 547-5511.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the
Fort Mill Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office at (803) 547-5511.

